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SUBJECT: EXPLAINING UN FORCE TO PRESIDENT DEBY:FRENCH ADVICE

Classified By: DCM LUCY TAMLYN FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D)

¶1. (C) Summary. Chad's unqualified support for UN operation in eastern Chad should not be assumed, according to French Ambassador Foucher. In a meeting with the Ambassador, Foucher emphasized that the UN peacekeeping operation needed to be carefully explained to President Deby as humanitarian in nature, and not intended to legitimize the Chadian rebellion. According to Foucher, the Chadians are particularly sensitive to the need to avoid any presence which might appear "hostile" to Libya. End Summary

¶2. (C) French Ambassador Bruno Foucher met with Ambassador Wall and DCM (notetaker) January 23 to discuss the recently issued report of the UN Secretary General laying out different peacekeeping options in eastern Chad. Foucher noted that the French position was very similar to that of the United States: the force must be robust and able to protect civilians (IDPs, refugees, humanitarian workers and the affected population.) However, the question of what role the force would play on the border and the extent to which the UN presence might elevate the stature of Chadian rebels was a sensitive one.

¶3. (C) Foucher elaborated that, based on conversations with Foreign Minister Allam-mi, he understood that President Deby was still reticent and had two major concerns. First, the UN presence and the "peace process" referred to in the SYG's report must refer to the relations between Chad, Sudan and CAR, and not to a process between Chad and Chadian rebels. President Deby would never agree to UN pressure to talk to Chadian rebels; any operation with this mandate would be rejected. Secondly, President Deby was very sensitive to Libya's objection to a military presence in the region and any effort which would be seen as competing with Libya as the region's chief "mediator."

¶4. (C) Foucher cautioned that if President Deby did not see his interests clearly spelled out in the force, he would reject the package. Therefore, the operation needed to be "sold" to Deby as a humanitarian activity, done in the context of improving overall Chad-Sudanese relations, and not intended to legitimize the Chadian rebellion. He urged the Ambassador to be aware of GOC concerns and bear in mind the need to consult closely with the Chadians on the mandate, the composition and the control of any proposed operation.

¶5. (C) Foucher reported that Foreign Minister Allam-mi had told him that if Sudan took the first step - and if it was verifiable - to cease from supporting Chadian rebels, then Chad would stop support to Darfur rebels. Pressed by the Ambassador as to whether it was in President Deby's power to do so, Foucher acknowledged that there would be other entities in Chad who would still seek to supply the rebels

(such as the President's half-brother, Daoussa Deby). But, Foucher noted that the President was finding the JEM presence to be a mixed blessing. Although the JEM had rendered important support to the Chadian National Army (ANT) in fighting in 2005 (Adre) and 2006 (Guereda), they were causing problems with ANT soldiers and had become a problematic presence. Foucher added that previously President Deby had truly needed JEM; with the current security situation better under control, he was not as needy.

¶6. (C) Queried by the Ambassador as to how best to approach President Deby, Foucher warned against a joint approach by UN Security Council members in N'djamena. He pointed out that President Deby would see that as pressure and he never agreed under pressure. Rather, he needed to have the situation carefully explained to him. The humanitarian aspect needed to be highlighted, as well as the point that the operation was in the overall context of improving relations between Chad and Sudan. It also needed to be explained to him that the operation was not trying to impose a political settlement between Deby and the Chadian rebels.

¶7. (C) Finally, Foucher noted that Foreign Minister Allam-mi needed to travel to New York to understand the issues at stake. He noted that the Chadian Permanent Representative was not very good and failed to keep the GOC updated on events in New York.

COMMENT:

¶8. (C) Post agrees that we must not assume Chadian acquiescence to a UN operation here -- their December 9 letter to the UN Security Council notwithstanding. They are still of the view that a civilian force is preferred, and -- particularly after the recent summit in Tripoli -- are

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probably more concerned about Libyan reactions to the operation. We believe that a letter to President Deby from the Secretary laying out the mandate and rationale for a force would be helpful in addressing President Deby's concerns.

¶9. (U) Tripoli minimize considered.
WALL